

LOCAL ECONOMY POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD

At a meeting of the Local Economy Policy and Performance Board on Monday, 16 June 2025 in the Board Room - Municipal Building, Widnes

Present: Councillors Jones (Chair), Teeling (Vice-Chair), Begg, Connolly, Garner, Gilligan, Ryan and Skinner

Apologies for Absence: Councillors Hutchinson, K. Loftus and Rowe

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: D. Cooke, G. Ferguson, M. Jones and S. Lowrie

Also in attendance: Councillor Bevan, J. Jones (Halton CAB) and N. Fedigan (Connect2Halton)

ITEMS DEALT WITH UNDER DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD

Action

ELS1 MINUTES

The Minutes from the meeting held on 24 February 2025, were taken as read and signed as a correct record.

ELS2 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

It was confirmed that no public questions had been received.

ELS3 CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

The Board welcomed Jo Jones, from Halton Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB), who gave an overview on the services offered in the Borough. CAB offered a free, confidential, impartial and independent advice and information on a wide range of subjects. In addition to this, they also provided advocacy and mental health support, access to charitable grants, volunteer training, budgeting skills and financial literacy programme, employability support and research and campaigning. In 2024/25 CAB Halton had assisted 7,695 people/households, advised on 54,116 different issues and achieved £6.2m income gains. The presentation detailed the impact the service had achieved for people in the Borough in terms of economic value and as

a voice for local people. It also set out the future of the service for 2025/26 and beyond and gave case study examples.

Members requested further information on the impact on the Council Welfare Advice Service since the reduction in Council funding towards Halton CAB and the type of public enquiries received.

Jo Jones was thanked for her informative presentation.

RESOLVED: That the presentation and comments made be noted.

Director
Economy,
Enterprise &
Property

N.B. Councillor Teeling declared an Other Disclosable Interest in the following item of business as she has a family member employed as an agency nurse.

ELS4 CONNECT2HALTON UPDATE

The Board welcomed Nicola Fedigan, from Connect2Halton, who gave an overview on the services offered. Connect2Halton was a joint venture company launched in September 2024, (50% owned by Halton and 50% owned by Kent Council) dedicated to recruiting a flexible workforce such as temporary and casual workers. The key features and benefits were as follows:

- 100% of the profits were returned to the public purse (50/50 split);
- external agencies were managed to ensure compliance;
- it provided a one stop shop approach for managers;
- produced a significant reduction in off-contract spend; and
- it was based within Council offices and therefore focussed on local engagement, not national agencies.

The following additional information was given following Members questions:

- the numbers of people in the candidate 'pool' and the areas of work they provided cover for;
- a meeting had been arranged with officers from Adult Social Care to discuss the provision of staff for the care sector using Connect2Halton;
- the service was prioritising Halton residents for casual work; and
- managers were being encouraged where possible, not

to recruit staff from other agencies and to use Connect2Halton.

Nicola Fedigan was thanked for her informative presentation.

RESOLVED: That the presentation and comments made be noted.

N.B. Councillor Teeling declared an Other Disclosable Interest in the following item of business as she has a family member employed at Halton Leisure.

ELS5 HALTON LEISURE CENTRE

The Board received a report and accompanying presentation, which provided an overview of the activities and operations at Halton Leisure Centre since its opening on 10 February 2025.

It was reported that the new leisure centre had seen an increase in users and membership, achieving approximately 1,000 new members since opening which had increased monthly direct debit revenue by circa £30,000 per month. It was noted that:

- a new building, plant, equipment and technology had required staff training, new systems of work and policies and procedures had been developed;
- some elements of delivery had been staggered and still developing, such as the café and soft play area;
- there was ongoing dialogue with Wates the construction company, and a defect reporting system had been implemented now the site had moved beyond the snagging phase;
- the Active Halton App had been refreshed and was being used by the majority of customers; and
- the new leisure centre complied with school's requirements for swimming and 8 schools were now utilising the pool with a further 2 due to start in September.

In response to questions and comments, the following additional information was provided to Members:

- problems with the balustrade in the pool area had been identified and this had been discussed at meetings held with Wates and Property Services; and
- the use of social media and marketing for the Centre had been highlighted and was being explored.

Members welcomed the presentation and thanked Sue Lowrie and Marc Jones for the update.

RESOLVED: That the presentation be received.

ELS6 ANNUAL REPORT FOR 24/25

The Chair presented the Employment, Learning and Skills, and Community PPB's Annual Report for 2024/25.

The Board had met four times during the year and the report set out the work carried out during the Municipal Year April 2024 to March 2025. He thanked all Members of the Board and Officers for their participation and support over the past year.

RESOLVED: That the Annual Report for 2024-25 be received.

ELS7 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORTS FOR QUARTER 4 OF 2024/25

The Board received the performance management reports for quarter 4 of 2024-25 (1 January to 31 March 2025) and were requested to consider and raise any questions or points of clarification in respect of these.

The key priorities for development or improvement in 2024-25 were agreed by Members and for the various function areas reported to the Board as follows:

- Enterprise, Employment and Skills; and
- Community and Environment.

The report detailed progress against service objectives and milestones and performance targets and provided information relating to key developments and emerging issues that had arisen during the period. Members were invited to highlight any areas of interest and/or concern where further information is to be provided to a future meeting of the Board.

The Board discussed Sci-Tech Daresbury and the financial and social rewards for the Borough. They were advised that the site has no financial cost for the Council. A further report would be brought to the Board with information on the issues raised by Members. In addition further information would be circulated on the Sandymoor Open Spaces Improvements.

Director
Economy,

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RESOLVED: That the quarter 4 performance management reports be received.

Enterprise &
Property

ELS8 COUNCILWIDE SPENDING AS AT 31 JANUARY 2025

The Board received a report from the Director of Finance, which gave the Council's overall revenue and capital spending position as at 31 January 2025, together with the latest 2024-25 outturn forecast.

On 13 March 2025, Executive Board received the attached report and appendices, which presented details of Councilwide revenue and capital spending by each department and outlined the reasons for key variances from budget.

Executive Board has requested that a copy of the report be shared with each Policy and Performance Board for information. This is to ensure that all Members had a full appreciation of the Councilwide financial position, in addition to their specific areas of responsibility.

RESOLVED: That the Councilwide financial position as outlined in the report be noted.

Meeting ended at 9.15 p.m.